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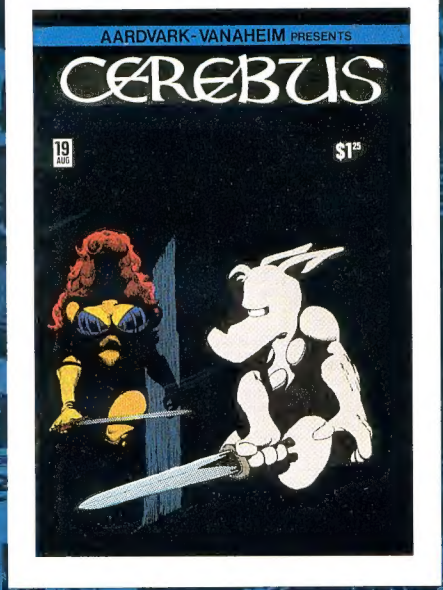
CEREBUS

bi-weekly



reprinting Cerebus number nineteen (1980) in its entirety

August 11, 1989

CEREBUS
bi-weekly
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CIRCULATION
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President

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The inside front cover of Cerebus 1 to 70 featured a 'Note from the Publisher' written by Deni Loubert. Dave Sim and Deni Loubert were married from October 6, 1978 to August 20, 1983. Deni Loubert currently resides in Long Beach, California.

CEREBUS

A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

Since the last issue a few things have happened that I thought you might be interested in. One of them is that we have decided to cancel the convention that we were trying to organize here in Kitchener. There just isn't enough free time between issues to do a good job of it at this late a date. We will have one, but when is a good question. Hopefully next year we will be more organized, but I wouldn't count on it. Actually, we do want to go ahead with it in the future. I'll keep you posted if things start moving.

In the last two issues we have put in mention of two different T-shirts that fans have let us know about. I now have received through the mail my sample of each one, and I must say that I'm really pleased with both. I wear them often and hope that these people are swamped with orders, for they deserve to be.

During the time that Dave was working on this issue, Dave received in the mail a notice that he had been awarded by the Small Press Writers and Artists Association (SPWAO) for best writing in the comics field. Not too long afterwards he received in the mail a very nice plaque from them. We are both very pleased with this recognition of Dave's work, and so I wanted to share with all of you the pleasant news of it.

I have been hearing from some people lately that they were having trouble getting their copies of issues 16 and 17. There was a small mix-up there because of our switching over to monthly, but things should be in order by the time this issue is out. Please don't hesitate to let distributors know if you are not getting yours on time. Sometimes it's the best way they have to make sure everything is getting out. (They are human, you know).

All in all, that's about all I have to say this issue. I had better finish this page off, so I can get to bed. It seems that once again I am the last to get my bit done for the issue, and the rest is sitting around me, waiting to be brought to the printers tomorrow morning. I hope that you enjoy this issue, the humour is again in control of the issue. That is, if anything with Cerebus has really the ability to control that little furry beast!

Deni

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Dave and Gerhard will be attending the SCAM (Strip Cartoons & Associated Media) Convention August 12th, 13th in Conventry, England. For further information contact Paul Duncan at 011-44 203 257-221.

The introduction below was written for **Swords of Cerebus**, six volumes of which were published reprinting Cerebus 1 to 25. It was written in 1981.

"She - Devil In The Shadows"

CEREBUS No. 19 (August 1980)

This is when the story started to get a little weird. I'd like to apologize to all of you right now who had been reading Cerebus since the first issue and picked up 19, 20, 21 and 22 and figured someone must have slipped something in your drinking water.

It all started with Perce.

As I said before, this is right around the time that the rendering was starting to become the most dominant element of the book (just as, in "High Society", the dominant elements are the design and the dialogue). At the risk of belabouring the point, this stemmed from Hal Foster's Prince Valiant drawings. I was trying to give a more realistic edge to the pictures, so I began work on sketches for the major characters. As I was to decide with Astoria later on, I decided to try and draw Perce as a real-real person (for reference, I class Cerebus as fantasy-fantasy, Elrod as fantasy-real, Lord Julius as real-fantasy, Filgate as real-fantasy, The Moon Roach as fantasy-real. Get the idea?)

So I decided Perce had to be real-real, about nineteen or twenty years old and that she would have the distinction of being a Cirinist pretending to be a Kevillist pretending to be a Cirinist. That's Togith for you.

So I decided, why not be like the REAL cartoonists (Hal Foster springs readily to mind) and draw a real person as Perce. I decided on Deni's sister, Karen for a number of reasons. We had pictures of her, she was the right age, (She was the person who suggested "Aardvark Press" leading to the decision to do an aardvark mascot) and (ho, ho, ho) she would be easy to draw. I never made that mistake again. If I draw real people in the strip now, I always make them caricatures. It's not that the results were all that bad, but it took an awful lot of effort to make the pictures barely adequate.

But the discipline required in learning how to draw a real person in cartoon form meant that I had a lot of time to contemplate the Kevillists and the Cirinists (since Togith is a major center for both groups). The more I worked on getting the pictures right, the more complicated the Cirinists and the Kevillists got and the more complicated the story line I was working on got.

I decided to do a parody of Frank Thorne's Ghita because while I wouldn't say I was fond of 1994 the magazine, nor a particular advocate of the kind of stories Frank was doing, I was very fond of the way Frank's artwork made such great strides when he switched to black and white from colour comics. I conceived the whole story in a short space of time, my major concern being to produce one good silly self-contained issue before I went off on this complicated political piece of over-lapping and inter-locking factions.

Lord Gorce was created (and developed further in this issue) to establish what would appear to be a major threat to Lord Julius' control of Palnu. I wanted to show that Lord Julius (like Elrod) always lands on his feet and that (unlike Elrod) it is as a result of his own sense of political timing and manipulation of resources at hand, even if that's just his own imagination (as seen by page twelve). It was my way of indicating that he was to be taken seriously by the reader even though his earlier appearances painted him as incompetent. After all, a leader who is perceived as incompetent is more likely to be underestimated by potential rivals. The impact of his endless successes, domestically and in the other parts of Estarcion can be seen in "High Society". "Nothing succeeds like success" as the saying goes.

Anyway, I started building the cornerstones for all the intrigue in this issue with Perce (she's not really a

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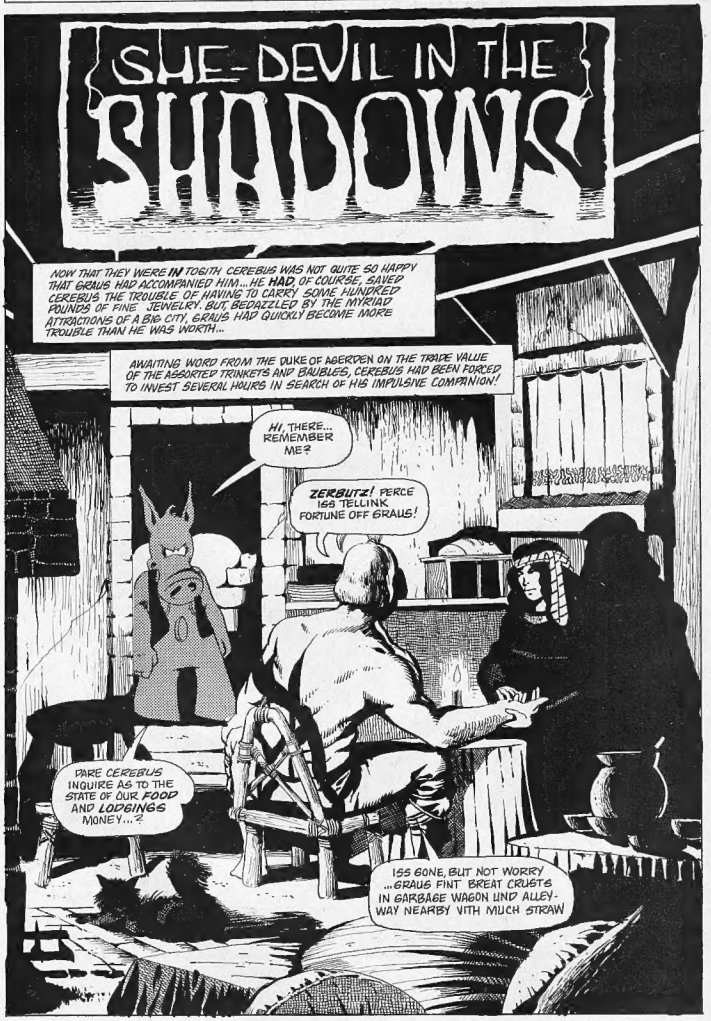
prostitute, but I won't go into that now). It was eventually to lead to my decision to do "High Society" in an attempt to frame a larger context for the story and find some way to address all the intrigues and power struggles at once. As I write this, I am half-way through issue 50 and it contains only one helpful line of dialogue.

I tried to explain the problem a while ago by explaining that most of the factors involved are secret societies--to put it in a more modern context, it is like a secret cell of Soviet spies in the U.S. government hiring North Vietnamese and Cuban infiltrators to find out if the Red Chinese embassy in Japan is really spying for the Lithuanians in an attempt to find out if the KGB was behind the plot to kill the Pope and hire more Afghanistan refugees to double-check the rumours about the John Birch Society joining forces with the Mafia to break the stranglehold the Teamsters have on the underground network of solidarity supporters in Moose Jaw.

Come to think of it, three hundred issues might not be enough.


SHE-DEVIL IN THE SHADOWS
NOW THAT THEY WERE IN TOGITH, CEREBUS WAS NOT QUITE SO HAPPY THAT GRAUS HAD ACCOMPANIED HIM...HE HAD, OF COURSE, SAVED CEREBUS THE TROUBLE OF HAVING TO CARRY SOME HUNDRED POUNDS OF FINE JEWELRY. BUT BEDAZZLED BY THE MYRIAD ATTRACTIONS OF A BIG CITY, GRAUS HAD QUICKLY BECOME MORE TROUBLE THAN HE WAS WORTH...
AWAITING WORD FROM THE DUKE OF ABERDEN ON THE TRADE VALUE OF THE ASSORTED TRINKETS AND BAUBLES, CEREBUS HAD BEEN FORCED TO INVEST SEVERAL HOURS IN SEARCH OF HIS IMPULSIVE COMPANION!
HI, THERE... REMEMBER ME?
ZERBUTZ! PERCE ISS TELLINK FORTUNE OFF GRAUS!
DARE CEREBUS INQUIRE AS TO THE STATE OF OUR FOOD AND LODGINGS MONEY...?
ISS GONE, BUT NOT WORRY ...GRAUS FINT BREAT CRUSTS IN GARBAGE WAGON UND ALLEY-WAY NEARBY VITH MUCH STRAW

CEREBUS HEAVES A SIGH-- HE HADN'T REALLY EXPECTED ANY OF THE MONEY TO BE LEFT.. WELL, WITH ANY LUCK THEIR BUSINESS WOULD BE FINISHED SOON AND THEY..
PERHAPS, GRAUS-- YOUR FRIEND WOULD LIKE HIS FORTUNE TOLD...?
CEREBUS DOES NOT APPROVE OF YOUR LIVELIHOOD...
FORTUNE-TELLING? IT IS AN HONEST WAY TO MAKE A LIVING... WHAT DON'T YOU...
YOU DON'T MEAN TO TELL CEREBUS THAT GRAUS SPENT THREE HOURS DOWN HERE HAVING HIS... FORTUNE TOLD?
WELL? WHAT ABOUT IT, YOU SHORT, GRAY PRUDE? I HAVE TO PAY MY RENT DON'T I?
THERE ARE OTHER WAYS FOR A YOUNG GIRL TO PAY HER RENT ...
TAKING IN LAUNDRY FOR EXAMPLE ...
TAKING IN--? I MAKE FIVE GOLD PIECES IN A GOOD NIGHT ...
WHAT DO YOU EXPECT ME TO DO?
STARCH EVERY LOIN-CLOTH IN BOREALA...?
HUH! HUH! HUH!
YOU-FIND-SOMETHING-FUNNY-ABOUT THAT?
NO! NO!
GRAUS WAS uh LAUGHING AT FUNNY CURTAINS

MEANWHILE, HUNDREDS OF MILES TO THE NORTH, LORD GORRE (LORD JULIUS' CHOICE TO RAISE AND LEAD AN ARMY AGAINST CEREBUS AND THE T'GITANS) CONFERS WITH COMMANDER SARTE, HEAD OF SEAP'S MILITARY GOVERNMENT...
I UNDERSTAND THAT LORD JULIUS HAS PUT YOU IN CHARGE OF RAISING AN ARMY TO DEFEAT THE BARBARIANS WHO HAVE CAPTURED FLUROC...
AS USUAL, COMMANDER
YOUR SOURCES ARE WELL-INFORMED ...
IN POINT OF FACT, THAT IS PRECISELY WHY I HAVE COME HERE! YOUR LONG-STANDING FRIENDSHIP WITH LORD JU... RATHER, WITH PALNU... RAISED HOPES IN ME THAT I MIGHT FIND YOUR GOVERNMENT TO BE ...SYMPATHETIC?
QUITE SO... INDEED..
I AM ALSO GIVEN TO UNDERSTAND THAT YOU ARE A MAN OF SOME AMBITION?
I SUPPOSE WE ARE ALL AMBITIOUS...
...IN OUR OWN WAY COMMANDER...
QUITE SO! INDEED! OF COURSE, SINCE I AM A MILITARY MAN, I FIND IT...ODD THAT LORD JULIUS WOULD CHOOSE ANOTHER MAN TO LEAD HIS ARMY...
LORD JULIUS HAS TOLD ME THAT HE IS QUITE BUSY.. MAKING CERTAIN...
...TRAVEL PLANS...
I SEE!

AND WOULD I BE MISTAKEN IN ASSUMING THAT YOU FIND LORD JULIUS' TRAVEL PLANS A TRIFLE··ah...
...PREMATURE?
SIR?
WHAT I MEAN IS; DOES IT NOT STRIKE A LOYAL... AND AMBITIOUS... MAN LIKE YOURSELF UNUSUAL AND DANGEROUS FOR YOUR COUNTRY TO BE WITHOUT A LEADER AT THIS CRITICAL TIME?
ONCE I HAVE DEFEATED THE T'GITANS, I INTEND TO RETURN TO PALNU...
WHEN WORD OF MY ACHIEVMENT HAS SPREAD THE PEOPLE WILL BE ASKED TO CHOOSE THEIR NEW GRANDLORD FROM THE ...
...AVAILABLE CANDIDATES...
I SEE. AND YOU WILL, OF COURSE, BE ONE OF THESE CANDIDATES?
MUCH WILL DEPEND ON THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE... OF COURSE THE TIMING OF THE ELECTION MAY PLAY A PART IN THEIR CHOICE
I INTEND TO HOLD IT THE DAY AFTER MY TRIUMPHANT VICTORY PARADE...
I THINK YOU WILL FIND THE ARMIES OF SEAF MUCH TO YOUR LIKING... YOU MAY DO WITH THEM AS YOU SEE FIT ...AND IF I SHOULD EVER NEED A FEW SMALL..... FAVOURS?
THE COMMANDER OF SEAF IS ALWAYS WELCOME IN PALNU
...AND IN THE OFFICE OF THE GRANDLORD...
I AM SO GLAD WE'VE HAD THIS OPPORTUNITY TO CHAT, LORD GORCE
YOU KNOW YOUR WAY OUT?

LORD GORCE?
HE'S GIVEN ME FULL CONTROL OF AN ARMY HARKER...
...AND THERE WILL BE NO OPPOSITION FROM SEAF WHEN THE PEOPLE PROCLAIM ME AS GRANDLORD..
EXCELLENT, SIR...!
EVERY SOLDIER WHO SWEARS EXCLUSIVE LOYALTY TO ME IS TO BE GIVEN DOUBLE HIS FIRST MONTH'S PAY.. ALL WHO WOULD REMAIN LOYAL TO COMMANDER SARTE ARE TO BE EXECUTED.. OH, AND HARKER...
SIR?
I THINK IT WOULD BE BEST TO SAY NOTHING UNTIL THEY ARE TWENTY MILES INSIDE OUR BORDER
IT WILL MAKE THEIR DECISION A LITTLE EASIER...
YES, SIR.. WHERE DO WE GO NOW?
IANAG...
PRINCE SHOMBER HAS BEEN EAGER TO MOVE INTO OUR HOMELAND RECENTLY. ANYTIME HE HAS TO GO FIVE YEARS WITHOUT AN EXPANSION OF HIS BORDER, HE BREAKS OUT IN HIVES...
I'LL OFFER HIM CI'NUFINN PROVINCE IN EXCHANGE FOR SOME OF HIS LIGHT CAVALRY...
CI'NUFINN PROVINCE! BUT, SIR, THE PEOPLE WOULD NEVER STAND FOR SUCH A...
YOU'RE NOT LISTENING, HARKER.. I SAID I WOULD OFFER HIM CI'NUFINN PROVINCE...
I NEVER SAID ANYTHING ABOUT GIVING HIM CI'NUFINN PROVINCE ...

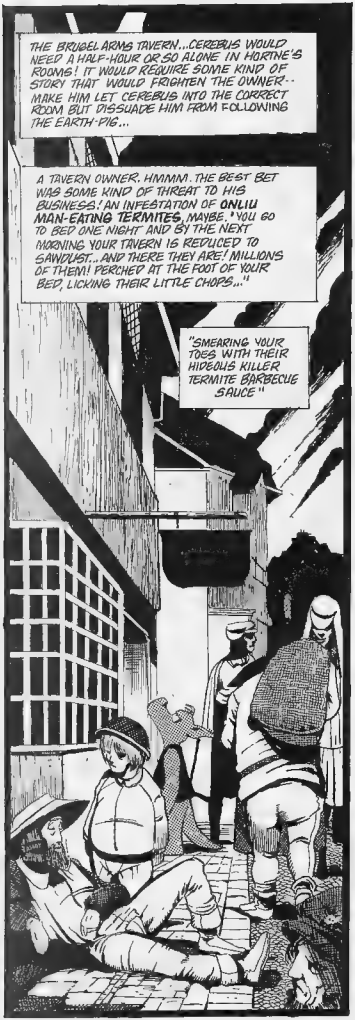
"YOU STAY HERE... CEREBUS IS GOING INSIDE, TALK TO DUKE OF AGERDEN, FIND OUT HOW MANY TROOPS WE GET FOR JEWELRY! AS SOON AS CEREBUS GET LETTER PROMISING TROOPS, WE GO BACK TO FORTUNE LADY'S! GET OUR STUFF AND GO HOME. BUT, UNTIL-THEN-YOU-STAY-HERE! IF CEREBUS COME OUT AND YOU ARE GONE, CEREBUS MAKE BRAUS-BURGERS OUT OF YOU! IF YOU UNDERSTAND, BLINK TWICE, AND THEN CEREBUS WILL LET GO OF YOUR TONGUE."

BUT TO BE HONEST WITH YOU, THERE'S REALLY TOO MUCH JEWELRY AROUND RIGHT NOW...IF YOU WANTED CASH -- BUT PIKEMEN AND CAVALRY? THEY'RE TOO MUCH IN DEMAND TO TRADE FOR JEWELRY
EVERYONE -- I MEAN EVERY-ONE -- SEEMS TO BE HAVING A WAR RIGHT NOW...
CEREBUS LIKED YOU BETTER WHEN YOU WERE SELLING PORNOGRAPHIC PRAYER BOOKS IN THE "DOG AND DUCK"
HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU -- I'M LEGITIMATE NOW! I'M A CERTIFIED DUKE OF THE HOUSE OF ABERDEN
I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW THAT I HAVE ALSO BEEN NAMED CHAIR-MAN OF THE ROYAL COMMITEE ON SCULPTURE
WONDERFUL...
TWICE A WEEK THAT FLITTY PRINCE OF YOURS DROPS BY TO OGLE ALL OF THESE LIMP-WRISTED STATUES...
THAT STILL DOESN'T EXPLAIN WHY CEREBUS CAN'T HAVE TWO BANDS OF PIKE AND SOME HEAVY CAVALRY...

I TELL YOU WHAT -- IT'S AGAINST MY BETTER JUDGEMENT, BUT SUPPOSE FOR OLD TIMES' SAKE, I WERE TO GIVE YOU YOUR MERCENARIES -- FREE... AND SUPPOSE I WERE TO ASK FOR A SMALL...TOKEN PAYMENT...
GO ON...
SAY -- FOR THE SAKE ARGUMENT -- THIS SMALL, EYE-PLEASING OWL...
I GET IT NOW!
THE OWL'S WORTH A FORTUNE, RIGHT?
LOOK! IF YOU'RE GOING TO GO ALL CYNICAL ON ME...
IS IT WORTH A FORTUNE OR ISN'T IT?
OF COURSE IT IS!
BUT IF YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S WORTH THEN THERE'S NO FUN IN CHEATING YOU...
OH.
SORRY.

QUITE ALL RIGHT...
ACTUALLY, THE OWL ITSELF IS WORTH ALMOST NOTHING -- BUT WITH ITS TWIN...!
WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO TWO BANDS OF THE FINEST HAND-PICKED PIKEMEN SOUTH OF THE FELD RIVER
AND THE HEAVY CAVALRY YOU ASKED FOR...?
THAT WOULD DEPEND ON HOW MANY PEOPLE CEREBUS HAS TO KILL TO GET THIS "TWIN OWL"
"KILL"?
GOOD HEAVENS NOTHING AS DRASTIC AS ALL THAT -- I JUST HAPPEN TO KNOW THE COLLECTOR WHO HAS THE OTHER OWL...
I WAS HOPING THAT, AS A GESTURE OF GOOD FAITH -- YOU WOULD BE WILLING TO... ACQUIRE IT FOR ME...
SAVE ME THE TROUBLE AS IT WERE...
AND WHAT IS CEREBUS SUPPOSED TO SAY TO THIS "COLLECTOR"
SAY? WHY, YOU DON'T SAY ANYTHING! NO ONE'S SEEN HIM IN THREE WEEKS...
SO YOU WANT CEREBUS TO JUST WALK IN AND STEAL THE OWL?
ACQUIRE!
ACQUIRE THE OWL -- PLEASE! BE CAREFUL OF WHAT YOU SAY! I'M A...
LEGITIMATE DUKE. YES -- THERE'S A RUMOUR GOING AROUND...
WELL -- CEREBUS ONLY HOPES THESE PIKEMEN ARE ALL YOU SAY THEY ARE...
THERE'S A DEATH PENALTY IN TOSITH FOR "ACQUIRING"...

"CEREBUS GOING INSIDE HERE--LOOKING FOR ROOM OF MAN NAMED HORTNE. CEREBUS IS TRYING STEAL ANOTHER GOLDEN OWL! YOU STAY HERE NEXT TO POST--NOT GO AWAY ANYWHERE!" "GRAUS NOT UNTERSTANT. WHY DUSS DUKE-PERSON NEET OWL WHEN ALREATY YOU HAFF GIFFEN HIM VUN. 2ND "IF CEREBUS WANT GRAUS TO ASK STUPID QUESTIONS, CEREBUS WILL PULL ON GRAUS' LEASH THREE TIMES"


THE BRUDEL ARMS TAVERN...CEREBUS WOULD NEED A HALF-HOUR OR SO ALONE IN HORTNE'S ROOMS! IT WOULD REQUIRE SOME KIND OF STORY THAT WOULD FRIGHTEN THE OWNER--MAKE HIM LET CEREBUS INTO THE CORRECT ROOM BUT DISSUADE HIM FROM FOLLOWING THE EARTH-PIG...
A TAVERN OWNER. HMMM. THE BEST BET WAS SOME KIND OF THREAT TO HIS BUSINESS! AN INFESTATION OF ONLIU MAN-EATING TERMITES, MAYBE. 'YOU GO TO BED ONE NIGHT AND BY THE NEXT MORNING YOUR TAVERN IS REDUCED TO SAWDUST...AND THERE THEY ARE! MILLIONS OF THEM! PERCHED AT THE FOOT OF YOUR BED, LICKING THEIR LITTLE CHOPS..."
"SMEARING YOUR TOES WITH THEIR HIDEOUS KILLER TERMITE BARBECUE SAUCE"

BLESS THE LIVING TARIM!
YOU'RE HERE!
YOU'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING! THREE WEEKS! THREE WEEKS! ALL OF THE PEOPLE WHO'VE GONE DOWN THERE--TH-THEY'VE NOT COME BACK UP AGAIN...!
DOWN THERE? TO THE CELLAR YOU MEAN?
AYE! THE CELLAR!! FIVE SOULS LOST!!
WHAT'S DOWN THERE? I MEAN ORDINARILY...
IT'S-- IT'S MASTER HORTNE'S APARTMENT!
YOU HAVEN'T SEEN ANY TERMITES AROUND, HAVE YOU?
WHAT?
NOTHING.

POOR MASTER HORTNE-- THREE WEEKS! HE'S PROBABLY BEEN DEAD ALL THIS TIME... KILLED BY THAT...THAT.
HAS ANYONE SEEN THE... WHATEVER IT IS?
NO - BUT YOU CAN HEAR IT WHEN SOMEONE GOES DOWN - SILENCE AND THEN THE SCREAMS - HORRIBLE BLOOD-CHILLING SCREAMS ...
I DON'T HAVE TO TELL YOU WHAT IT'S DONE TO MY BUSINESS! NO ON WILL COME IN FOR A DRINK... EXCEPT WHEN THE WORD SPREADS THAT SOMEONE ELSE IS VENTURING DOWN THERE
THEN THE PLACE IS PACKED WITH PEOPLE BETTING ON THE TIME IT WILL TAKE FOR THE SCREAMING TO START...
AN HOUR LATER, ARMED WITH A SWORD THE EARTH-PIG DESCENDS INTO THE STYGIAN GLOOM...
TWO BITS HE DOESN'T MAKE IT TO THE BOTTOM OF THE STAIRS..
THREE TO ONE? ANY TAKERS?
YOU'RE COVERED ...
BUT NOT BEFORE BETTING A GOLD COIN AT TWENTY-TO-ONE ODDS THAT HE WILL RETURN SAFELY...
EACH SOUND SEEMS MAGNIFIED OUT OF ALL PROPORTION...
...AS THE EARTH-PIG STRAINS TO ANTICIPATE THE ATTACK OF HIS UNSEEN FOE
THERE IS A SMELL OF DEATH IN THE AIR - SHARP AND PERSISTENT...
HE HEARS A SOUND FROM SOMEWHERE TO HIS LEFT...
HE PAUSES..
...AS A FIGURE STEPS FROM THE SHADOWS SNARLING...
SOPHIA! WHAT ARE..?
BEET-A

THE FIRST STROKE, DELIVERED WITH IMMENSE POWER AND PRECISION, ELIMINATES ANY DOUBT OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY...
...RED SOPHIA SIMPLY WASN'T THAT SKILLED...
THE SECOND DRIVES THE EARTH-PIG BACK A FEW FEET AS HE BEGINS TO PLAN HIS ATTACK ...
THE THIRD STROKE CATCHES HIM OFF-BALANCE AND HE BARELY MANAGES TO DEFLECT IT...
THE FOURTH STROKE MISSES ONLY BY ACCIDENT, AS HE IS CAUGHT WITH HIS SWORD ARM DOWN ...
THE FIFTH GRAZES HIS SHOULDER AND, AS HIS FINGERS GO NUMB, THE SWORD CLATTERS TO THE FLOOR...
...IT IS THEN THAT HE NOTICES THE DOOR A FEW FEET AWAY...
...AND WONDERS, ABSENTLY, IF HE WILL LIVE TO REACH IT...
CEREBUS CROUCHES LOW AND LEAPS FORWARD AS THE SWORD HUNGS ANGRILY ABOVE HIM...
NOW LITTLE MORE THAN A FOOT AND A HALF FROM HIS GOAL, HE PRESSES AGAINST THE DAMP STONE FLOOR...
...AND THE RETURN STROKE MISSES, AS WELL...

RISING TO A CROUCHING POSITION, CEREBUS BEGINS TO REACH FOR HIS FALLEN WEAPON...
...AS HE HAD EXPECTED...
...SOPHIA'S LOOK-ALIKE IS THERE BEFORE HIM, SWORD POISED TO ADMINISTER THE DEATH-BLOW...
BUT, CEREBUS IS ALREADY SCRAMBLING FOR THE DOOR...
TOO LATE, SHE REALIZES HER MISTAKE! SHE TURNS, ENRAGED, THE SWORD RAISED ONCE MORE...
EVEN AS CEREBUS BURSTS THROUGH THE DOORWAY TO SAFETY...
...PRAYING ALL THE WHILE THAT THERE IS A...
...LOCK ON THIS SIDE OF IT...
SLAM
CLAK
WELL, WELL, WELL, IF IT ISN'T CEREBUS, THE WORLD-RENOWNED AARDVARK...

meanwhile, somewhere in palnu

LORD JULUS - I AM THE OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN FOR THE PALNU CRISIS BOARD OF IMPEACHMENT INQUIRY..
YOU REALIZE, OF COURSE, THAT THE OTHER GROUP BEAT YOU TO IT?
OTHER GROUP?
WHAT OTHER GROUP?
YOU CLAIM TO BE PART OF THE IMPEACHMENT INQUIRY AND YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE "EXECUTIVE ACTION COMMISSION?"
NO WONDER YOU BOYS ARE LAGGING SO FAR BEHIND THEM!
I DIDN'T... THAT IS..
WE ARE!
I SUPPOSE YOUR GROUP IS PROPOSING THAT I STEP DOWN VOLUNTARILY AND TURN OVER CONTROL TO AN INTERIM GOVERNING BODY?
WELL...NOT IN SO MANY... ER...THAT IS ALL OF US FELT ...AND WE WERE VERY CONCERNED ABOUT...
YOU'VE BEEN INFILTRATED, MY BOY - WHY HALF OF YOUR FOUNDING MEMBERS ARE PROBABLY EXECUTIVE ACTION AGENTS PLANTED TO KEEP AN EYE ON YOU
ARE YOU QUITE SURE? WE'VE BEEN REALLY CAREFUL...
NO DOUBT OF IT... IF I WERE YOU, I'D CHANGE MY ROUTINE... KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR PEOPLE BEHIND ME...
WOULD YOU LIKE A MILITARY ESCORT THERE HAVE BEEN A LOT OF ASSASSINATIONS IN YOUR LINE OF WORK LATELY...
WELL YES - THAT IS IF IT'S NOT...
NO TROUBLE AT ALL - TAKE THIS VOUCHER TO THE RECEPTIONIST AND SHE'LL ISSUE YOU SOMETHING WITH A SHIELD AND A HELMET
JUST LEAN IT AGAINST A LAMP-POST WHEN YOU'RE FINISHED WITH IT..
AND I'D RUN A SECRET CHECK ON ALL YOUR MEMBERS IF I WERE YOU...
I WILL! I WILL! THANK YOU.
IF THEY'RE ALL THAT GULLIBLE I SHOULD BE ABLE TO HOLD OUT FOR YEARS...

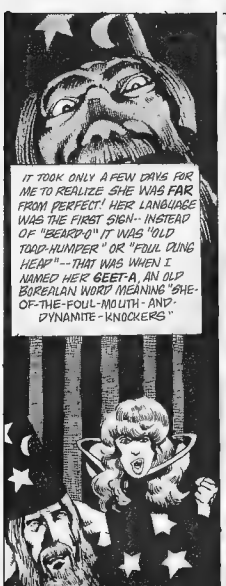
DON'T JUST STAND THERE GETTING EMOTIONALLY INVOLVED WITH MY POOR...
COME IN! COME IN!

HENRIT!*
CEREBUS SHOULD HAVE GUESSED..
SO THAT IS RED SOPHIA OUT THERE THEN?
RED SOPHIA? MY GOODNESS
NO! NO! NO!
* RED SOPHIA'S FATHER. SEE CEREBUS #3 "SONG OF RED SOPHIA"

MOVE ALONG, GRISELDA! YOU'LL HAVE TO FORGIVE THEM...
..WE DON'T GET MUCH COMPANY DOWN HERE..

NO--THAT ISN'T SOPHIA-- I HAVEN'T SEEN HER IN OVER A YEAR...
YOU SEE, I MISSED HER TERRIBLY...
NEXT TIME, AIM BETWEEN THE EYES...
I'M GOING TO IGNORE THAT...

I ANGUISHED FOR MONTHS--WHEN SUDDENLY IT OCCURRED TO ME--I WAS A MAGICIAN! WHAT WAS TO PREVENT ME FROM MAKING MYSELF A RED SOPHIA?! THIS TIME, SHE WOULDN'T JUST BE A DAUGHTER--THIS TIME SHE WOULD BE A POSSESSION! THE VERY THOUGHT! NO BACKTALK! NO..."HEY, BEARD-O--HOW LONG DO I HAVE TO WAIT 'TIL YOU CROAK--HUH? HOW LONG?"
I COULD ELIMINATE ALL OF THE FLAWS--THE MISTAKES OF NATURE! AND AUGMENT THE pattern: MORE POSITIVE QUALITIES ...
YOU WANTED THEM TO HANG TO HER KNEES...
PRECISELY.
I MEAN NO! DON'T BE SUCH A WISEASS AARDVARK...
...SO I ORDERED MY APPENTICES AWAY--THIS WAS BLACK ART I WAS CONTEMPLATING! I NEEDED EVERY OUNCE OF MAGIC I COULD SUMMON TO CREATE A NEW SOPHIA FROM THE TRACES LEFT IN THIS HER NEW HOME IN TOGITH
SHE WAS A PERFECT DOUBLE. AND THAT WAS THE TOUGH PART--CHANGING ONLY ASPECTS OF HER! THERE WERE PARTS OF HER BRAIN THAT HAD TO BE BUILT FROM SCRATCH
...OBEDIENCE, TIDINESS, THRIFT....
AND SO IT WENT FOR TWO WEEKS UNTIL I HAD COMPLETED IT--A PERFECT VERSION OF SOPHIA
I DECIDED FAIRLY EARLY TO SWITCH TO FINE SILK INSTEAD OF CHAINMAIL
I'M NOT AS PARTIAL TO SCAR TISSUE AS I ONCE WAS...
I HAD HOPED THAT IT MIGHT IMPROVE HER DISPOSITION A WEE BIT, AS WELL.


IT TOOK ONLY A FEW DAYS FOR ME TO REALIZE SHE WAS FAR FROM PERFECT! HER LANGUAGE WAS THE FIRST SIGN-- INSTEAD OF "BEARD-O" IT WAS "OLD TOAD-HUMPER" OR "FOUL OLING HEAP"--THAT WAS WHEN I NAMED HER GEET-A, AN OLD BOREALAN WORD MEANING "SHE-OF-THE-FOUL-MOUTH- AND-DYNAMITE-KNOCKERS"

SHE STARTED COMING HOME LATER AND LATER, SINGING BAWDY BALLADS AND MAKING RUDE NOISES WITH VARIOUS PARTS OF HER ANATOMY... THE TOGITH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE REVOKED MY "GOOD NEIGHBOR AWARD"!.. THE MAGICIANS GUILD CANCELLED THEIR FATHER AND DAUGHTER BANQUET BECAUSE THEY WERE AFRAID WE MIGHT COME...

AFTER HER ALL-NIGHT BINGES, I'D FIND DISTURBING ...THINGS IN HER ROOM...
THINGS? WHAT KIND OF THINGS?
SEVERED HEADS, INTERNAL ORGANS, GOLD FILLINGS, RINGS WITH FINGERS STILL IN THEM-- SHE SAID A GIRL-FRIEND GAVE THEM TO HER, BUT I WASN'T FOOLED FOR A MINUTE..

IN SHORT SHE WAS EVERYTHING SOPHIA WAS AND MORE- AND STILL I WASN'T SATISFIED! I MEDITATED UNTIL I CAME UP WITH THE REASON...
WHICH WAS?
I HAD NEVER LIKED RED SOPHIA IN THE FIRST PLACE

I COULD SEE ONLY TWO SOLUTIONS...
I COULD SEND HER OUT TO CONQUER THE SEPRAN EMPIRE AND MOVE WHILE SHE WAS GONE...

OR YOU COULD MAKE HER YOUR PERSONAL WATCHDOG
SHOO!
I WAS AFRAID SHE WOULD DEFEAT THE EMPEROR'S LEGIONS AND RETURN BEFORE I GOT EVERYTHING PACKED..

ACTUALLY, IT WAS A VERY SIMPLE PROCESS -- I JUST WAITED UNTIL SHE CAME HOME DRUNK AND CONJURED A CHAIN CONNECTING HER LEFT ANKLE TO THE FAR WALL... AS I SUSPECTED SHE HAD LET HER NATURAL IMMUNITY TO SORCERY LAPSE WHILE INEBRIATED..
SHE ERECTED HER DEFENSES AGAIN IN THE BLINKING OF AN EYE, BUT IT WAS ALREADY TOO LATE
SHE'LL NEVER BE CAUGHT WITH HER GUARD DOWN AGAIN...
BUT...
ALL SHE CAN DO IS VENT HER ANGER ON MY OCCASIONAL VISITORS..
SHE REALLY IS A WONDERFULLY VICIOUS WATCHDOG, TOO
BUT I GUESS YOU ALREADY FOUND THAT OUT, DIDN'T YOU?
BUT-- THAT MEANS YOU CAN'T LEAVE-- YOU'RE PRACTICALLY HER PRISONER...!
PRISONER?
YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING! SO FAR, SHE'S HACKED UP TWO BILL COLLECTORS, TWO ENCYCLOPEDIA SALESMEN AND MY EX-WIFE...
THIS IS THE LONGEST PERIOD OF UNINTERRUPTED WORK I'VE MANAGED SINCE I WAS SIXTEEN..
ACTUALLY, THOUGH, IT DOES MEAN THAT YOU'RE A PRISONER...
I'LL TELL YOU WHAT! I'LL JUST WHIP YOU UP A QUICK SLEEPING BAG AND A TOOTHBRUSH..
THANKS ANYWAY...
BUT CEREBUS PLANS TO GET OUT OF HERE WHILE HE STILL HAS SOME HIS SANITY INTACT

ALL THAT CEREBUS WILL NEED IS A SHIELD OF INVISIBILITY
OR FOR YOU TO PUT BEET-A TO SLEEP FOR A FEW MINUTES...
I'M AFRAID BEET-A'S DEFENSES ARE TOO GOOD... MY MAGIC CAN'T HELP YOU AT ALL...
OH DEAR. YOU'RE NOT GETTING ANGRY ARE YOU?...
OF COURSE CEREBUS IS ANGRY!! WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?
DO?
WHY I'M NOT GOING TO DO ANYTHING...
CAN'T SAY THE SAME FOR MY PET GERBILS, THOUGH -- THEY FEED ON VIOLENT EMOTIONS
ESPECIALLY ANGER...
DON'T TENSE UP...
JUST KEEP RELAXED... BREATHE IN AND BREATHE OUT -- RELAAAX...
THIS ISN'T EASY...
YOU'RE DOING FINE...
ANOTHER FIVE MINUTES AND THEY COULD START TO LOOSEN THEIR GRIP...
CEREBUS JUST HAD A THOUGHT...
IT MUST HAVE BEEN A GOOD ONE -- THREE OF THE GERBILS JUST LET GO...
THESE GERBILS... THEY'RE NOT TECHNICALLY MAGICAL ARE THEY?...
AS I SAID THEY'RE PETS -- MAGICIANS BREED THEM AS ORGANIC CONTROLS -- THEY KEEP US FROM GETTING TOO EMOTIONAL...
YOU CAN'T AFFORD ANY FEELINGS TO INTRUDE ON A DELICATE INCANTATION -- IT UPSETS THINGS TOO MUCH -- BLEW UP MY FIRST APPRENTICE THAT WAY..
EH -- WOULD YOU MIND JUST GETTING CRANKY FOR A FEW MORE MINUTES -- I HAVEN'T FED THEM LATELY
ACTUALLY, CEREBUS CAN DO BETTER THAN A FEW MINUTES OF CRANKINESS...

PERMIT CEREBUS TO DEMONSTRATE ...
TARIM..
I ALMOST FORGOT
YOU WOULDN'T HAPPEN TO HAVE A GOLDEN OWL AROUND HERE WOULD YOU?
I MAY HAVE AT ONE TIME! I USE A LOT OF GOLD IN MY SPELLS! IF I DID, IT WAS MELTED DOWN AGES AGO...
WHY? WAS IT IMPORTANT?
ACTUALLY, IT IS..
I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU COULD WHIP ONE UP FOR OLD TIMES' SAKE?
SURE. HOW'S THIS?
MMMM NO...
IT HAS TO LOOK LIKE THE OTHER ONE.
MORE LIKE THIS..
..YOU KNOW?
HO
HO
HO
SMALL JOKE. I THINK I REMEMBER THE OWL YOU'RE THINKING OF ...
LIKE SO?
HMM... WELL DONE!
HOW LONG WILL IT HOLD ITS SHAPE?
EXACTLY SIX MONTHS
THAT SHOULD BE LONG ENOUGH...

GEET-A?
CEREBUS WOULD LIKE TO LEAVE NOW
UNH?
SO WHY DON'T YOU TAKE THAT AWFUL EXCUSE FOR A BODY ...
AND RELOCATE IT TEMPORARILY? -- CEREBUS DOESN'T WANT TO HAVE TO FIGHT YOU...
THE SMELL IS BAD ENOUGH FROM OVER HERE...
RRRR
TALK ABOUT DEVASTATING REJOINDERS -- DID YOU MAKE IT UP YOURSELF...
OR WAS YOUR SPEECH THERAPIST PART WOLF?
okay henrot · let them...
...GO!
DON'T GET UP, GEET-A -- CEREBUS CAN FIND THE DOOR ON HIS OWN...
MGM FGG SGBTSHA GABG!!
YOU'RE QUITE WELCOME ...

"GRAUS--CEREBUS IS GOING INSIDE--PICK UP OUR PACKS--COME RIGHT OUT AGAIN!...GRAUS STAY HERE AND WAIT FOR CEREBUS."
"JA, JA, JA. HOW ABOUT ZERBUTZ GIFF GRAUS TVENTY GOLT PIECES ZERBUTZ VIN IN TAFFERN? GRAUS KEEP THEM SAFE FOR ZERBUTZ!" "NO" "NO? VHY NOT?" "BECAUSE CEREBUS IS NOT STUPID." "OH, JA--GRAUS REMEMPER NOW...ZERBUTZ NOT STUPID.."

CEREBUS HAS JUST COME TO RETRIEVE OUR PACKS ..CEREBUS CAN'T STAY...
WHAT A SHAME - I WAS JUST ABOUT TO POUR SOME WINE...
OF COURSE A FEW EXTRA MINUTES ISN'T GOING TO MAKE MUCH DIFFERENCE...
YOU'RE WELCOME...
CEREBUS DIDN'T SAY 'THANK YOU!'
YES--I NOTICED..
GRAUS--CEREBUS ASKED ME TO GIVE YOU THE LETTER FOR GUORE
HE'S GOING TO STAY WITH ME FOR A WHILE...
ZERBUTZ NOT DIG-A-PROOF OFF PERCE'S LIFE-LEE-HOOT NOW, EH? HUH HUH HUH...
BE CAREFUL YOU NOT HURT ZERBUTZ--HE'S NOT SUCH BIG WARRIOR AS GRAUS
HUH HUH HUH
DON'T WORRY, GRAUS--I'M GOING TO TAKE GOOD CARE OF CEREBUS,...
VERY GOOD CARE...

CEREBUS
bi-weekly
August 11, 1989

This advertisement appeared in the original Cerebus No. 19

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CEREBUS
bi-weekly
August 11, 1989
THE AARDVARKIAN AGE
Cerebus No. 19

This is the second appearance of the Aardvarkian Age by Michael Loubert

the aardvarkian age

by Michael Loubert

The T Gitans were originally Boreas lans, from up north. They were a mercenary band, with camp followers and other hangers-on. Wandering about the Feldwor states, they settled in Seaf for awhile but left to avoid the civil war that broke out there. Togith allowed them in.

The following is an excerpt from "The Book of Twenty-Three". Its author was a certain Suentaus Po, an adventurer who lived about one hundred fifty years before Cerebus.

Lord Po was residing at the time at the court of the Prince of Togith. He had quickly gained the favour of the Prince, becoming a figure of some power and influence. Below, he rises to an informal early morning meeting with the Prince.

So when I awoke I turned over and lit up a good pipeful of Tai Chi Yellow. Felt better instantly. Bawled for Henh, noticed the room was blue this morning. Bad omen.

Out to the door was a chest. On the chest mine own trusty scimitar. By Tarim! as they say here in Togith, they didn't make scimitars like that in the Feld Lands! I distinctly remember thinking. Then Henh (almost sings) came in and I said:

"Blue for today!

"Yes, Majesty," he replied, for I had told him I was a King back home in Zilthaday though these barbarous Feld account me but a Lord.

So blue it was, sword left behind and down to the chambres of the Prince of Togith. Broke my fast on cold meat and colder news.

There were problems with the Dagithans or Tagithans (some such barbarous name). This I knew. Boreatan mercenaries in Cit Learagh, having fled the troubles in Seaf. They were being enrolled in the army, their wives and children hostages. Only temporarily.

They grow uneasy, wheezed the scaly old fart (or maybe it was the smoke I had) but I knew more than the Prince. Was I not his trusty advisor and good right arm for nothing?

"Never a fear," I exclaimed. "We be civilized folk, more than a match for any tribe of barbarous northmen. Ah, uneasy, you say?"

His hand prodded at the meat before him. "We have their kin in our power," he croaked. "Yet they dare lay charges of corruption upon mine own officials."

I smiled, to hide the turmoil within. They were mine own paid officials, not his - where did he get his information? Wait! What his own - no, no guilt on my doorstep. Can I not think straight? There was heavy breathing - his or mine?

I blinked. The Prince was staring at his plate. Old dotard. Mayhap he will die of Pleurisy soon and I will be spared much travail.

"The officials. The charges."

"Eh?" I blinked again. Oh yes, the Dagithans. Dog, was he on to some thing? My knees were shaking - the cold, no doubt.

"I have heard the magistres in Cit Learagh have forbidden grain to the Dagithan mercenaries. They are starving. Am I not the Prince? Can I trust no one?"

What an opening. "You can trust me, your Grace. I will dig into this disgrace. These good folk should not be reduced To eating grass! Dogs know what diet is in far Boreale. Tree bark and boiled leaf?

The Prince laughed. "Trust you? You best trust me. Come to Togith Court, a stranger with no friends, no past..."

"Just my remarkable intelligence, steadfast loyalty -

"And complete modesty." He snorted and poked at my own plate of untouched meat. "You are loyal because if I weren't here you would be naked before the wolves of this court."

Ah, but you didn't know about Lord Arnoc. But I said instead, "When shall I leave for Cit Learagh your Grace? "I was coming down, but another pipeful would be good on the road.

"I will give the matter further thought," replied the Prince. "The council must be consulted and you must be provided with the proper credentials." His head dropped, then flopped suddenly onto his plate.

Dead already? I thought, but my limbs were frozen. I could feel the wet of the frost. No weapon, sword up in the room. I'm the only witness, but the only suspect for some. The court would have loved to have seen me broken on the wheel. My mind raced - possible future-lines; things to do, escape routes planned.

You see, my mind was quite calm, but my damned legs refused to move.

I heard the door behind me flung open. My shoulders tensed - a natural reaction, of course. I was preparing myself for decisive action.

"My Lords! The Dagithans!" I nearly jumped out of my skin. It was but a messenger.

The Prince's head shot up. It's amazing what sound waves can do to the unanimated corpse! Only he wasn't dead (Dog take it!) and his mouth worked for a minute.

The Prince has had a minor hit," I soothed. "What of these -

"The Dagithans! They have massacred the Cit Learagh garrison and are marching on Togith, in open defiance!"

I heard the Prince gargle, thumping the wooden table with both his puny fists, then, eyes staring, crumple onto the floor. Pushing the messenger aside, I checked the body for signs of life. None.

I'm afraid he's really dead this time. What timing.

The messenger just scratched his head. "Oh, shit."

* * *

Next month, Lord Po finds life in Togith becoming dangerous. Instead of merely confusing.

By Cerebus' time, the Principality of Togith had become the main clearing house for Feldan mercenaries. The Prince had become a figurehead, and the real power was wielded by various Barons who had become involved in trade (mercenary and otherwise). They had originally been rather enterprising, lawless types who had pushed out west, but they eventually settled down and organized.

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CEREBUS
bi-weekly
August 11, 1989
AARDVARK COMMENT
Cerebus No. 19

This is the original letters page to Cerebus No. 19

AARDVARK COMMENT

- KITCHENER-ONTARIO N2G 1W6

Dear Dave and Deni

I didn't expect you to be able to maintain quality on a monthly schedule, but I was wrong. I just got 16-17 and the art is at a new high, particularly the party scenes of 16 and the splash panel beginning 17. The plotting is also up to that of the Jaka issue, and the humor is as good as it ever was The anamundisms are still there but easier to ignore than the one about "condominiums". Only one thing hurts and that's the THORisms in 17: 'we doth have business' 'wouldst thou remindeth' I hope this is Krull's ignorance not yours Praise Herbie

Philip Michael Cohen
726 Golf Course Road
Aliquippa PA 15001

Yea and verily toil the artists at their labours Stroke upon stroke and jest upon jest, seeking always their reward in the epistles from the boonies And what does he find on the back of such feeble postal cards as this? "Anamundisms" and "Thorisms" A dictionary! A dictionary! My aard vark for a dictionary!

* * * *

Dear editor (you do edit your own stuff don't you, Dave?)

Whenever I read an issue of Cerebus for the first time (and, yes, many issues are well worth more than one reading) I find myself scrutinizing the major new characters to see if they are based on already-existing characters, real or imagined So you can imagine my feelings when I saw the cover of 17 (can't you?) There, staring grimly out from his dominant position on the cover was an imposing character who looked not unlike a certain popular four-colour barbarian who is also popular in his paperback book form and apparently due for a "major motion picture"... need I go on? Is this possible. I asked myself It would seem almost too direct a parody for this mag, given its basic nature Having read the story, I'm not so sure that my first feelings were correct. However, Krull is nauseatingly competent and vicious just like you-know-who, so I'm still wondering What's the verdict? Did I jump the gun?

Another character, Gudre, was more obviously derivative — from the lovable SGT SCHULTZ of Hogan's Heroes, but Stromm seemed too nondescript to me to have any definite origins of this type The story itself? Well, I was almost too wrapped up in the generation of characters to notice, but what I did manage to take in seemed to me to be the funniest stuff in several issues There was also an edge of drama to it since Krull truly is a formidable opponent and one wonders if Cerebus will be able to handle him (or rather, I guess, how Cerebus will be able to handle him) One sour note was that in the last panel Lord Julius refers to a "two-part story" thus intimating to us his awareness of his fictional nature Let's have no more of this. This mag works only because the characters take their ludicrous selves seriously

Now that you're monthly, will the target of 156 issues mentioned several issues ago be upped to 312 or whatever? (Let's hope so)

T.M. Maple
Toronto Ontario

*Nauseatingly competent and vicious sums it up, all right You missed guessing the identity because you didn't watch the gradual transformation take place Krull started off as Kregg who was intended to be a parody of the Colonel Flagg of the CIA character from M*A*S*H Try the voice out and see if it fits As to your speculation on the number of issues, I still plan to do the book for twenty six years (as I mentioned in that issue) The first two years, Cerebus was bi-monthly — 12 issues Twenty four more years of monthly issues — 288 issues The last issue will be issue 300 Did you ever get the feeling you were sharing the pilot's seat with someone else?*

* * *

Dear Dave & Deni —

I just finished reading 13, 14 & the TBG sequence. 15 is on the shelf and I'll read it soon. I've gotten all of the Cerebus to date except episode 8 of the TBG story

The art continues to improve with each issue. I was going to suggest reprinting 4 a page at a time in TBG if you don't have time to do more "Sunday" pages now that you're going monthly — but the art isn't really up to your present standards

The stories, in general, are each as funny or funnier than the one before — except 14 which was a let-down to me (I guess Groucho never got to me

)

Now it can be told (I suppose I could have told you last December, but I'm circumspect) I was trying to convince the Deleware Valley Comic Consortium boys to do a single character con as we did with Sonja and Howard the Duck, and the character was to be (ta, ta-ta) Cerebus!

Unfortunately after three losing conventions in a row (Howard the Duck, Women in Comics, Christmas Con) the boys decided not to do a con in 1980 at all. Judging by the economic conditions this year, they are probably right

I wanted you and Cerebus as the feature because of the interesting qualities of Cerebus which should get good pre-con publicity and because I knew that you would co-operate 100% ahead of the con to make it succeed

By the way, publicity did fail

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August 11, 1989

This is the original letters page to Cerebus No. 19

AARDVARK COMMENT

- KITCHENER-ONTARIO N2G 1W6

on Christmas Con — How often did I hear, "Oh, you had a con in December?"

Howard Leroy Davis
38 Simpson Avenue
Pitman N.J. 08071

Deni and I were guests at Howard's home the night before the Philadelphia Christmas Con. Coincidentally enough, that was where I finally figured out who would be the ideal ruler for Palnu. I guess Howard's lack of enthusiasm for Groucho blows my chance at having a brass plaque commemorating the event installed on his mantelpiece. Seriously, if anyone else is interested in risking untold thousands of dollars on a Cerebus con, do let me know. (especially if you want to have it in California or Miami in February)

* * *

Dear Deni

I'm impressed by your covers to 16 & 17. They are nowhere near my favourites of your covers, but they certainly do stand out and attract the eye, which is what a good cover should do. Keep up the effort to present artistic variety.

I generally prefer in-depth stories that run for several issues to single-issue stories, unless the latter are exceptionally clever — and on a monthly schedule, you can't win all the time. On the other hand, I do like adventures to come to a distinct conclusion every so often — stories that run over six issues tend to become tedious to me. I don't especially care for "realistic" scripting in which the episodes all segue imperceptibly from one to the next.

Charles Garofalo's comments in the letter column of 16 are interesting if only for their implication that Cerebus is not the first aardvark to visit this planet/dimension/whatever. There must've been at least one earlier one to serve as the model for the aardvark god. Maybe there's some kind of psychic mutation in an infinitesmal portion of the population of an aardvark-dimension that matures around their 26th birthday and inadvertently teleports them to our world.

Fred Patten

That would certainly explain our spare bedroom being wall-to wall 26 year old aardvarks anyway. If they weren't so cranky, I'd insist that they move their dimensional doorway somewhere else. Fred also reports that he has gotten all of one subscription to the Cerebus newsletter. Contributions and subscriptions ($2.00 for four issues) can be sent to him at the address above.

* * *

Dear Dave and Deni

I thought that earth-pig aficionados everywhere — especially those engaged in the theological end of Cerebus studies, might be interested in the enclosed article, of which the most aardvarkian passages have been marked.

Keep up the great work!

Sincerely
Jeff Fruen
1496 Raymond Avenue
St. Paul, Mn. 55108

Jeff sent along news clippings from the ST. PAUL PIONEER PRESS re counting the battle which is looming over the aardvark between Eugene McCarthy ("I lost in '76) and John Anderson ("I'm going to lose in '80".) It seems that Anderson is adopting the aardvark as his campaign symbol for November. And to quote one of Anderson's tireless little golfers the aardvark idea was "just something that spewed out of Anderson's mouth one day." This prompted McCarthy to protest in the Washington Post and New Republic magazine "the violation of the privacy of the aardvark." Mc. Carthy feels somewhat paternalistic towards the aardvark since he called his book of poems released in 1970 Other Things and the Aardvark." Mc. Carthy claims that he wrote the poem hoping people would read it and lose interest in the earth pig so his privacy would be protected. In addition (and I'm going to straight quotes here, because I find it hard to believe myself), McCarthy was quoted as saying, "The interesting thing about the aardvark is that it didn't evolve from anything and it's not evolving into anything. It's kind of an absolute animal. You can say the aardvark is like any other animal, but you can't say any other animal is like the aardvark. Because if it's like an aardvark it is an aardvark. The same is true of God. You can say that God is like anything at all, but you can't reverse it. Because if you do, it has to be God. This is a heavy metaphor, the aardvark.

Thank you, Eugene McCarthy. Coming in future issues, Aardvarks in Dealy Plaza by Mark Lane, Beachhead Aardvark by John Foster Dulles and much, much more.

* * *

NOTES

I'd like to say a special thank you to Wendy Pini this time around. Y'see I have had the idea in my head for Cerebus 20 since I started drawing 18. It's going to be a different kind of issue (unless I chicken out at the last minute) and I was worried about that. Intellectually, I understand that the readers of Cerebus don't mind if I do an occasional issue that isn't quite the same in format and style. Viscerally, I have one eye out the window watching for the line of villagers' torches wind-ing up the mountain passes.

And then Deni and I got The Dreamberry Tales issue 7 of ELF QUEST. The whole story took place (for the most part) in a small cottage with everyone getting drunker by the minute and was chock-a-block with silly jokes, mugging, sight gags.

No fight scene (not really) no heroism unparalleled no pageantry.

Attagirl, Wendy.

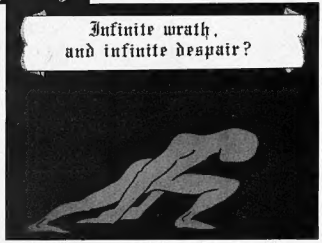
Next issue is my turn.

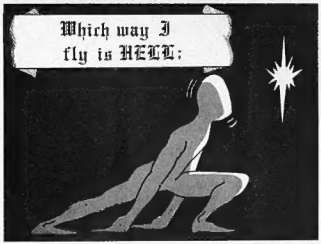
After that, my plans are a little fuzzy. I have a pretty good... I say I have a pretty good idea of what's happening in issue 21, too (stand up, son, you're fallin' all over yourself!) Having decided to make the Tarans assault on Palnu as realistic as possible, I've got a few more issues before we actually see what happens on the battlefield. I will be trying to give each issue a distinctive plot however beginning and ending in the twenty pages. For example, with this issue, if you don't like continued stories just ignore pages 1, 2 and 20. Voila self-contained unit. (Oh look Deni — here comes the villagers again!

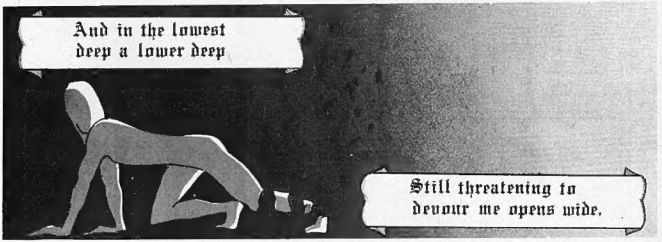
I could go on for hours, but you're falling asleep already and I still have to correct the spelling mistakes in this issue and separate the cover. Anyway, next issue is "Mind Game" and you can be watching for it around the middle of September.

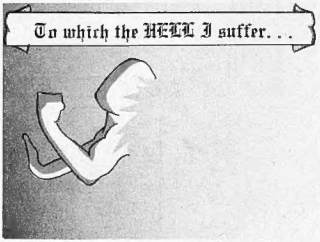
Bye

The Single Page









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THE SINGLE PAGE

By Debbie & Robert Sinninga

WHILE YOU WERE OUT...
One day Old Silas drove his truck into Kingsville...
... to pick up some things.
SPEC
A literary review caught his eye.
...and I will kill anyone who buys this book!
Inspired, he bought ten copies.
BOOKS
But this was too good to pass up.
Old Silas hadn't read a single book since high school.

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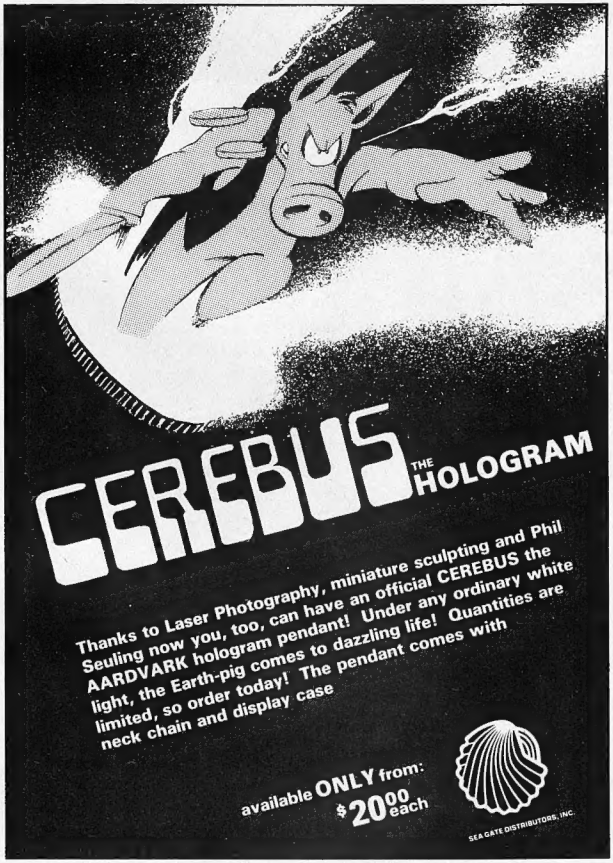
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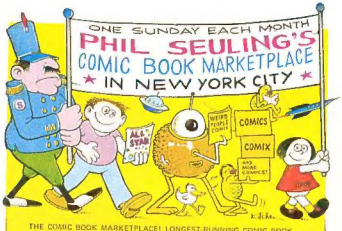

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